July 2010 Issue 13

# Rural & Frontier Health Division Update

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Welcome to the thirteenth issue of the "Rural and Frontier Health Division Update!" This newsletter is provided as an informational source on activities involving the programs and services within the division. Comments and/or suggestions are welcomed and may be addressed to WDH-RFHD@health.wyo.gov.

# Office of Rural Health



# Applications Sought for Loan Repayment Program

The Wyoming Department of Health is accepting applications from qualified medical professionals who would like help paying their student loans in exchange for practicing in Wyoming.

The Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program repays physicians, dentists and allied healthcare providers for costs of eligible educational loans in return for a commitment to practice in an underserved area in Wyoming for a minimum of three years.

"In a recent survey, 100 percent of the physicians who considered practicing in another state identified the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program as critical in their initial decision to practice in Wyoming," said Sharla Allen, Office of Rural Health manager with the Wyoming Department of Health.

"Our efforts are paying off," Allen continued. "Wyoming's loan repayment program has helped recruit and retain more healthcare professionals into our state's areas of greatest need than three federal programs combined."

Physicians and dentists are eligible to receive up to \$90,000 over a three-year period, and other eligible healthcare professionals are eligible for up to \$30,000 over a three-year period. The program is competitive with emphasis given to counties and certain medical specialties and professions of greatest need.

Applications can be completed on-line at <a href="http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html">http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html</a> and are due by September 30. All current and future licensed healthcare professionals are eligible to apply; those not currently licensed in Wyoming may apply up to one year prior to obtaining their license.

Allen expects her office to receive more than 300 applications for the program during the 90-day application window.

Please contact the Office of Rural Health at 307-777-2930 or email <a href="mailto:jeff.hopkins@health.wyo.gov">jeff.hopkins@health.wyo.gov</a> for more information on this or other healthcare loan repayment or scholarship programs.



The Office of Rural Health will host a two day grant writing workshop on September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Holiday Inn in Riverton. The workshop will be presented by Grant Writing USA. Usual fees for the class are \$425; however, the September workshop will be supported by grant funding through the federal State Offices of Rural Health grant; a registration fee of only \$25 is required.

This training is open to all Office of Rural Health partners with an emphasis on community based organizations. A registration form will be available soon on the ORH website: <a href="http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/index.html">http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/index.html</a>

#### Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program

Applications for participation in the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program are being accepted through September 30, 2010. All licensed healthcare providers are eligible. Physicians and dentists qualify for up to \$90,000 (\$30,000 per year for three years) for committing to practice in a shortage area as defined by the Office of Rural Health. Other professions qualify for up to \$30,000 (\$10,000 per year for three years) with the same conditions. More information and a link to the online application are available at <a href="http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html">http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html</a>.

The Office of Rural Health recently conducted a survey of current and past participants in the Wyoming Healthcare Professional Loan Repayment Program. 100% of the physicians who considered practicing in another state (n=25) identified the Program as Very Important or Important (68% and 32% respectively) in their initial decision to practice in Wyoming. Additionally, participation in the program was the number one consideration for all participants in their decision to continue practicing in Wyoming (53.1% Very Important and 30.1% Important; 83.2% combined). The full report is posted online at <a href="http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html">http://health.wyo.gov/rfhd/rural/loan.html</a>.

#### Physician Recruitment Grant Program

Applications for the Wyoming Physician Recruitment Grant Program (WPRGP) will be available soon. These grants are awarded to recruiting entities to help offset expenses incurred in recruiting physicians into Wyoming from other states. Check the Office of Rural Health website for more information in the coming weeks.

## Recruitment and Retention Workshop

The Office of Rural Health will co-sponsor Wyoming Health Resources Network's healthcare professional recruitment and retention workshop on October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Garden Inn in Laramie. The workshop includes a Recruitment 101 for the basics, as well as information on Wyoming programs and federal programs, such as the National Health Service Corps. We encourage all who are involved or have an interest in the recruitment and retention of medical professionals in Wyoming to attend. Information about registration, specific speakers, and sessions will be announced soon. To be included in the registration mailing, please contact WHRN at (307) 635-2930 or e-mail your contact information to phunt@whrn.org.

#### Rural Health Clinic Seminar featuring Mike Bell, CPA

The Office of Rural Health sponsored and Evanston Regional Hospital hosted Mike Bell, CPA to present "Rural Health Clinic Basics." Mr. Bell is a renowned CPA who works with over 150 RHCs. The seminar was held in the historic Beeman-Cashin building in Evanston June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Rural Health Clinic designation is a federal certification that qualifies a primary care clinic for increased Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.

Six hospitals considering establishing Rural Health Clinics and one current Rural Health Clinic were represented. Mr. Bell presented information and answered questions from 1-5 pm. He compared various clinic models and discussed the benefits/limitations associated with each clinic model. Slides from the presentation can be referenced on-line at: http://www.health.wyo.gov/Media.aspx?mediald=9121.

"If a CAH (Critical Access Hospital) owns and operates a clinic and it is not operated as a Rural Health Clinic (provider-based clinic) it is probably being heavily subsidized (by the hospital) and that subsidy could be significantly reduced or eliminated. If a stand-alone practitioner's compensation is not what he/she believes it should be, additional compensation of \$50,000 per year may be achieved through RHC status," said Bell.

Thanks in part to Governor Freudenthal's action last year, 20 of Wyoming's 23 counties are eligible to become Rural Health Clinics. Rural Health Clinics may be owned by hospitals, private practices, or a community. Rural Health Clinics can be for-profit or non-profit. Clinics and or communities interested in establishing a Rural Health Clinic can contact the Office of Rural Health for technical assistance

# Medicare and Medicaid Programs Proposed Changes Affecting Hospitals and Critical Access Hospitals

Below is information about proposed changes to Medicare and Medicaid Programs affecting Hospital and Critical Access Hospital (CAH) Conditions of Participation, specifically new credentialing and privileging processes for telemedicine services. This proposed rule would revise the conditions of participation (CoPs) for both hospitals and critical access hospitals (CAHs). These revisions would allow for a new credentialing and privileging process for physicians and practitioners providing telemedicine services.

Comment period is open until July 26<sup>th</sup>. You can find the entire proposed rule here: <a href="http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-12647.htm">http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/2010-12647.htm</a>. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact TASC@ruralcenter.org at any time.



#### The Total Health Record, an EHR option

On the high plains of rural and frontier medicine, electronic health records (EHR) are not the silver bullet to solving our difficulties in regards to the delivery of quality care at a reasonable cost; however, this is an important element.

Providers and patients in rural settings are challenged in arriving at optimal health outcomes. Efforts on a national, regional and local level, involving initiatives such as the Chronic Care model and the Patient Centered Medical Home have evolved as tools to improve the delivery of and access to quality care. A critical component to the success of such programs is the electronic health record (EHR).

The Wyoming Department of Health embraced the idea of an EHR prior to national efforts. This project evolved from the state Medicaid agency and pre-dated the passage of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). The Wyoming Department of Health Total Health Record (THR) initiative combines a health information exchange capability with limited EHR in a web based functionality.

The initial purpose of the Total Health Record (THR) was to help providers manage patients with certain conditions according to evidence-based guidelines. Claims data has been gathered and standards are already in place for health conditions such as diabetes, adult and child wellness and asthma. Cardiovascular standards are also being developed. When deployed, the THR will be accessed through secure web portals designed for provider and patient use with the following functions:

- Portable continuity of care record / health record that patients can access or print
- E-Prescribing
- Results reporting/messaging

- Secure patient-provider communication
- Population level health reporting
- Claims inquiry

These functions will enable providers to meet the proposed Meaningful Use standards. This project will provide a platform for interoperability across state systems and provide EHR functions to those providers without their own EHR in place. The timeliness of the build out of the THR in combination with the federally funded Provider Incentive Program offers physicians a real opportunity to see a return on their Electronic Health Records investment.

For this project the Wyoming Department of Health has partnered with a reliable company, ACS a Xerox company, who has done similar work in Alabama, Hawaii, and Kentucky.

# Multicultural Health (WOMH)

#### Summer Cultural Sensitivity Training

The Office of Multicultural Health will be hosting a Summer Cultural Sensitivity Training at Casper College July 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The presenter will be Gary Bailey, M.S.W. This is a two day conference on recognizing the effects of cultural bias and how to re-evaluate our own attitudes and personal experiences with people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, age, and mental and physical abilities.

For more information contact Keith Cross at (307) 268-2604. To sign up for the webcast, contact Lillian Zuniga at 307 777-5601 or <a href="mailto:lillian.zuniga@health.wyo.gov">lillian.zuniga@health.wyo.gov</a>

# Workshop teaches girls on Wind River Reservation to fight back

The Office of Multicultural Health sponsored the STOP! -- Survival Thinking, Observation and Planning Workshop held on the Wind River Reservation, June 19<sup>th</sup>. The Flies Away Consulting Group presented a workshop on survival thinking which taught the girls how to protect themselves and to develop a winner's mindset. The program stresses prevention first, then fighting back.

# Community Services Programs (CSP)

# WYOMING CARES/WYOMING SHARES Participates in 5th Annual Cheyenne Day of Giving

Wyoming Cares/Wyoming Shares along with Donor Alliance participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Cheyenne Day of Giving on May 7, 2010 at the Cheyenne Community House. Community Services Programs staff along with local volunteers visited with potential organ donors about the organ donation registry process and benefits.

Jenny Winters, a ten year survivor of a double lung transplant and Caydence Brannaman who is waiting for the same life changing procedure (pictured) met for the first time at the organ donation table. Jenny is a constant advocate for organ donation and has written numerous articles on the subject and her personal experience since receiving her donated lungs.

Forty-eight individuals stopped by the organ donation table and ten new designated organ donors were enrolled in the Wyoming registry at the event.



# NOWCAP Financial Literacy of Wyoming Eastern Wyoming Group

The Eastern Wyoming Group of NOWCAP Financial Literacy serves the counties of Goshen, Niobrara, and Weston. These three counties are mostly rural, with small populations. There are only about 21,000 people in the entire area.

There are several institutions of the Wyoming Department of Corrections in Goshen and Niobrara counties. We have begun teaching Financial Literacy at the Torrington facility and are making arrangements to teach at the Newcastle facility. By teaching Financial Literacy as part of the pre-release programs at these facilities, we are helping the inmates to be better prepared to handle the outside world after their release. We have recently completed a week of teaching at the Torrington prison, with a total of 35 students. This has been a great experience for NOWCAP.

In addition, we are scheduled to do some training for a group of at-risk youth that are participating in a summer jobs program through the Torrington Workforce Center. We will have a class on budgeting and related topics before they start work and a follow-up class at the end of the summer.

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We continue, as well, to teach individuals as they come to us. We currently have several individual students that we are working with.

# NOWCAP Financial Literacy Kemmerer, Wyoming

Out of NOWCAP's financial literacy office in Kemmerer, Wyoming we service two counties; Lincoln and Sublette. Those two counties have 8,965 square miles of land with a total population of 21,916; 14,573 in Lincoln County and 7,343 in Sublette County.

The office in Kemmerer was established in December of 2009. In the six ensuing months the office has provided financial literacy training to 147 individuals with 75 of those completing the entire Money Smart Training program and received a certificate of completion.

Of the seventy-five who have completed the Money Smart, thirty-eight were Alternative High School students, thirty in Afton and eight in Kemmerer. All are considered at risk teens. There are ten other teens that have completed part of that training.

Seventeen were drug and alcohol offenders who were court ordered to attend counseling. High Country Counseling Center in Pinedale made the Money Smart training part of their rehabilitative treatment.

The remaining twenty are higher functioning "special needs adults" in Kemmerer and Afton. They are clients of Lincoln Self Reliance that have been recognized as capable of some degree of independence. It is LSR's goal to help them achieve as much self reliance as possible. NOWCAP financial literacy and Money Smart were a natural fit.

Sixty of the others are senior citizens, many of whom are learning to live on a fixed income. My connection with them is through the Kemmerer Senior Citizen's Center. It is the intention of both the staff at the center and me that NOWCAP Financial Literacy will continue to provide training in areas that specifically relate to the needs of seniors. I also hope to expand this type of opportunity through senior centers in Afton, Pinedale, and Big Piney.

Three of those are a mother and her high school age daughters in Thayne. The mother wants her daughters to learn to manage their own money before they become independent. That class is half complete, but has been delayed until the mom completes work in the census, a second job she has taken to help make ends meet.

Those remaining are either individuals who have come to NOWCAP in a state of financial difficulty and needed some help learning to budget and getting their finances under control or someone wanting help in learning how to start a small business.

#### Vital Statistics Services

#### Men's Health

Over the last six years (2004-2009), boys account for 51% all live births in Wyoming. There are 105 males born to every 100 females. The average age of a father who has a new baby is 29.

The average age of a male getting married in Wyoming is 34; married men live longer then unmarried men. Another fact is that Wyoming husbands file for divorce 38% of the time. Over the last six years (2004-2009), Wyoming women have been outliving men by 7 years (using the median 79 for females vs. 72 for males). Also a female has been the oldest living decedent every year during this time. In 2006, the oldest Wyoming living male was 106, the highest in the six year span. Males comprise 58.5% of all infant deaths in Wyoming. 12.8 % of all infant male deaths in Wyoming were due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

The following are the leading cause of deaths for all males during 2006:

Cause	National Ranking	U.S. Percent	Wyoming Ranking	Wyoming Percent
Heart Disease	1	26.3	1	23.2
Cancer	2	24.1	2	22.7
Unintentional Injuries	3	6.6	3	8.9
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	4	4.9	4	7.9
Stroke	5	4.5	6	4.1
Diabetes	6	3	7	3.0
Suicide	7	2.2	5	4.2
Influenza and pneumonia	8	2.1	8	2.2
Kidney Disease	9	1.8	-	1.4
Alzheimer's disease	10	1.8	9	1.8
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	-	-	10	1.7

<sup>\*</sup> National Ranking and U.S. Percent of Leading Causes came from CDC (http://www.cdc.gov/men/lcod/)

# NEWS FROM THE RURAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (RAC):

The Rural Assistance Center Health Update recent news and funding opportunities can be found on the following link: <a href="http://www.raconline.org">http://www.raconline.org</a>.

# **Upcoming Events:**

- Quality and Clinical Conference, July 21-23, 2010, Portland, ME
- Rural Health Clinic Conference, September 28-29, 2010, Kansas City, MO
- Critical Access Hospital Conference, September 29-October 1, 2010, Kansas City, MO
- Rural Multiracial and Multicultural Health Conference, December 1-3, 2010, Tucson, AZ

We're on the Web! See us at: www.health.wyo.gov/rfhd